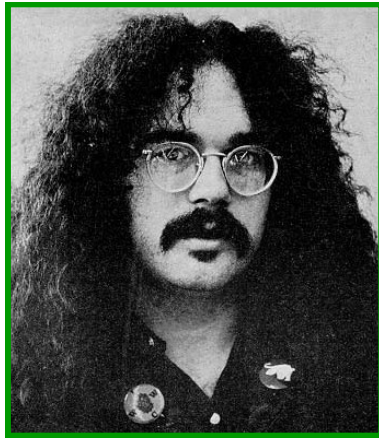


Marijuana Revolution



John Sinclair

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It might seem strange to a lot of people to spend so much time and energy—and so many pages—on the subject of marijuana, which is after all only an innocuous naturally-occurring weed that people smoke to get high. But what's even stranger is that an increasingly frightening number of people are being ordered to spend inconsiderable amounts of time (9½ to 10 years in my case) in penitentiaries and prisons simply for smoking this weed in America these days. People who do smoke marijuana are probably pretty much aware of the things I want to say in this article, but for those who can't understand what all the commotion is about, maybe my remarks will be helpful.

It just doesn't seem to make any sense to have so many people smoking and praising this weird little weed marijuana, and it makes even less sense to see these people attacked so viciously by the purveyors of "law and order." But once some basic facts concerning marijuana use and marijuana repression are established, it seems to me that the whole issue will become much clearer, and that we can finally move to rectify the situation which is now so confusing.

There are two essential questions I want to deal with: (1) What are the intrinsic properties of marijuana, that is, what are its effects on the bodies and the minds of its users? And (2), what are the social properties of marijuana, that is, what effect does its use have upon its users as social beings in America now, and why is there so much opposition from the state to its use by young people? These two questions can be distinguished one from the other for the purposes of this discussion, but my assertion is and will be that they cannot be separated from one another in actual practice—for people do everything they do in the world as social beings, and whatever they do has its causes in the social circumstances in which they find themselves just as it has its effects in the same arena. Which is only to say, everything is everything, and nothing can be separated from its context in the world, if you

can relate to that.

The intrinsic properties of marijuana are probably best described in the simple statement, *it gets you high*. Marijuana, or weed, or grass, or reefer, or whatever you want to call it, gets people high, and they love it for that. They love it because it makes them *feel good*, like no other substance known to man, and in doing this it has no adverse effects whatsoever: it causes no hangovers, it doesn't deaden (but rather it heightens) the senses, it is not toxic or poisonous, it is not addictive in any physical term, it's easily ingested, easily and quickly assimilated into the bloodstream, easily and quickly taken in by the brain and transformed into a euphoric force which quickly informs the whole body of the smoker. In fact, the only thing wrong with it is that its effects don't last long enough—every few hours you have to recharge yourself with a few more tokens on that good weed, in order to maintain that nice high.

And one of the best features of this high is the increased sensual perception marijuana brings—it makes you more aware of your body, of the workings of your mind, of the immediate environment in which you find yourself. It sharpens your sense of taste, of smell, of touch, of hearing, of sight, and that sixth sense as well, the sense of totality of feeling, of being a whole organism alive on the planet and in touch with what's going on around you. It makes you feel more natural, like you're really an animal walking around on Earth and not simply some abstraction to be taken into account by governments and computers and salesmen and employers and income tax collectors who lock on you as a cog in their machine.

But you see how quickly we pass from the intrinsic, or personal, into the social, and that's only right too, because like I said we can't possibly separate the one from the other as long as we are living in the world and not in our heads.

The point is that people who smoke marijuana don't

get high in a vacuum—in fact, the overwhelmingly significant fact about marijuana in the West (where we are) is that people are getting high in the middle of a heavy anti-euphoric culture, and that its effect as a dynamic euphoriant immediately puts its users in a position of conflict with the dominant culture.

In the first place, as I suggested just now, we live in a social order, or under a social order which is essentially anti-euphoric, and although this social order is rapidly becoming obsolete (due to a fundamental change in the economic and technological underpinnings of its culture), the people who control this social order are definitely from the old school, the control school, and they are desperately trying to maintain their control the only way they know how. They are the dinosaurs of the machine age, they believe firmly in the absolute virtues, of competition, consumption, control, and closed consciousness, and their idea of having a good time boils down to getting drunk, playing golf, watching Bob Hope or Ed Sullivan or Spiro P. Agnew on TV, going to a football game, making money, buying a big new car, going to the beauty parlor for a new hairdo, mixing it up at a cocktail party, and maybe going on a vacation trip and staying in Howard Johnson motels on the way.

But they aren't like that by accident—all culture develops as a function of the operative economic and technological factors in a particular time and place, and the control culture of present-day America has been created by the demands of the capitalist economic system and the industrial technology which it has developed to serve its needs. The machine age demands a very serious attitude from the people who are caught up in it, it demands subservience to the machine itself and to the "owners" who control the machine, it demands allegiance to the concept of efficiency and control, and it severely limits the range of possibilities for life and consciousness among its people. Workers in the industrial age, and especially those industrial workers who labor within a capitalist system

which is constructed to bring maximum profits to an ownership minority, are kept chained to their machines and desks by the relentless drive for more efficiency and more profits for the owners, and their life away from “the job” is almost wholly given over to various forms of escape from the work-a-day world. Their culture is an escapist culture which is most precisely characterized by their use of alcohol and their intense interest in various types of “games”. When they are away from the factory or the office or the store, the workers (a term which I will insist includes not only assembly-line laborers but also clerks, managers, service suppliers, bureaucrats, secretaries, and all those who contribute to the success of industry while having no effective share in the means of production or the products of their labor) are interested in little but escaping from that world of work, in deadening their senses and decreasing their awareness of social realities so they can stand their situation better when they return to the job.

Now I know that these are widely sweeping statements and of course they don’t hold true for all workers, or all the people who participate in the dominant culture in this country, but when we talk about cultures we are by definition talking about general developments with innumerable specific deviations from the norm. And I don’t think it’s any kind of exaggeration to say that the dominant culture is an escapist culture, and understandably so—the controlling forces have fostered a schizophrenic situation wherein the “common man” is kept enslaved in the industrial-productive system for the best part of his time, and propelled into escapism when he’s off the job so as to “compensate” for the privations and humiliations he suffers “at work”. The industrial system depends for its survival on deadening the senses of its human components both on and off the job—for if the workers were to expand their sensual awareness (that is to say, their consciousness) they would realize the unjustness of their situation and they would refuse to contrib-

ute any further to their own enslavement.

So one of the major functions of the state in a capitalist industrial system is to keep the people firmly in line, and capitalist culture reinforces the power of the state to the extent that it instills in the citizens the values and tenets of the ownership class and gives the people the illusion that they have an effective stake in the survival of that system. Without this feeling of meaningful participation in the system, the people who live under that system would have little interest in seeing the capitalist system perpetuate itself. But with such a feeling the people will make concessions and sacrifices and go along with whatever's offered them simply because they are given to feel that there are no alternatives, no possibilities for life outside such a system.

Marijuana makes people aware of alternatives to the machine life of American industrialism—it demonstrates in a very specific term that there are other and more exciting possibilities for life in this day and age than whiskey and football games and ulcers and a lifetime on the assembly line or in the office, and it makes people wonder why this old-time shit is still going on. Instead of deadening people's consciousness, marijuana brings people back to life and expands their awareness of the world and their own possibilities for life in that world, and it leads them to questions that otherwise wouldn't have been asked: why are we at war in Indochina? Why is racism so rampant in every area of American life? Why can't people love each other? Why are our politicians and businessmen and generals such liars and hypocrites? Why is everything so fucked up?

The answers to these questions are beyond the scope of this essay, but that isn't the point here anyway. My point is that more and more young people are being led, and I will say definitely being led by their use of marijuana and other psychedelic agents, to ask these questions, and to seek out the answers for themselves. I've seen this happen in myself, and for the past five or six years I've

seen it work all around the country, and I will insist that the tremendous increase and spread of marijuana use has had a direct and definite effect on this process, an effect which has led to the subsequent (I would say consequent) increase in marijuana repression by the established state.

Now I'm getting back to where I started from, but before I go on I should elaborate on the social and economic conditions in the West today, so we can see the whole context in which this increase in marijuana use (and in marijuana repression) is taking place. We (that is, humanity) now have the possibility, for the first time since the Paleolithic, of living in a society based on material abundance, a world in which people's productive, social and cultural life will not be determined by conditions of material scarcity. Mankind was born into abundance for millennia, and human culture—tribal, audile-tactile, communal—grew up in (and out of) this economic condition, being transformed into its opposite—fragmented, visual-linear, individualistic—when the pre-scarcity economic condition was transformed by an ever-increasing population into a condition of scarcity. This transformation took place first in the West, where the material (physical-geographical) conditions were the poorest, and as scarcity conditions replaced pre-scarcity conditions a Western culture based in scarcity consciousness grew up and eventually replaced the pre-scarcity culture. This scarcity culture and the necessities of scarcity economics produced what we know as agricultural, then trade, then imperial, then feudal, then mercantilist, then industrial, and now cybernetic technology and culture, being determined at each stage of development by the economic conditions which obtained in the West.

My point is that now, with the advent of cybernetic technology, we are equipped to end scarcity and move on into the future, which will be a period of post-scarcity abundance, re-tribalization (through electronic technology and the new post-scarcity economics), and a world-

wide communalism based on common wealth and common access to the abundance made possible by the new technology. This is our destiny as a people, and the only thing that's holding us back from it now is the continuing domination of the capitalist ownership class over the means of production, i.e. the cybernetic technology, and their determination to use this technology only in the immediate interests of profit and control. Their position is understandable—their lives and their desires have been shaped by scarcity conditions and they don't understand the implications of the technology they've created in furthering their class interests—but they must be implacably opposed until they are removed from the seat of power so that humanity can progress as it's supposed to.

Marijuana, taken within this overall context, prepares people for the future. Its use within this social context promotes communalism, sharing, ego-loss, increased sensitivity to the needs of other people, creativeness, heightened awareness of natural possibilities, and other related character traits which will prepare people to live in the age of post-scarcity abundance. The young people who are smoking marijuana and getting high in the West right now are ready to step into the new world, they have evolved in a very short time a new-world consciousness and a new-world culture, they are natives of the new world even as it is just being born, and if the change were to come tomorrow they would be the first full citizens of the future, fully at home in the age of abundance.

But since they exist in the old world and carry on their activity within the context of the old world, their use of marijuana puts them in conflict with the control elements of the old order and makes them see the absolute necessity of rejecting and abolishing the scarcity system and culture and of replacing them with a whole new system, a post-scarcity, post-Western social system based on the free exchange of energy and materials and complete self-determination for all peoples.

The post-Western young people who smoke weed and

stay high are painfully aware of the inadequacies of the old order to begin with, i.e. even before they start getting high — electronic technology has played a large role in developing that modern awareness—and when they start smoking marijuana within the confines of the dominant culture their awareness of the contradictions inherent in the dying system is incredibly heightened. They get so high that they don't want to put up with those contradictions any longer, and they learn that in order to stay high—and in order for all people to get turned on like they are, which is one of their primary goals—the old order, the anti-euphoric order of the machine age, has to be completely and irreversibly abolished, done away with, so that people can be free to follow their natural destinies.

“The history of mankind is one of continuous development from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom” (Mao Tse-tung said that), and it's hard to hold people back when the economic necessity for being held back is no longer operable. In America today—throughout the world—the move is for more freedom, starting in the economic realm as everything does and moving through the political and cultural superstructures which are shaped by and which reflect that economic base. The Revolution which is total and ongoing is about freedom for all people to develop themselves and their cultural and economic activity to their highest possible levels, and it is being carried out against the forces of capitalist control which insist that only the privileged people of Earth, the people of their choosing, are entitled to their freedom.

Let me try to get back again to where I left off some time back. I don't want to make marijuana seem to be a powerful revolutionary weapon, because in and of itself it's only a relatively harmless little old weed. But I'll repeat (and this is so important to me that I'll probably repeat it a few more times before I get done with this) that marijuana (nor anything else, for that matter) cannot be taken by itself, that it must be examined within the context in which it is used, and that it is this context of

Western industrial society which gives marijuana its social utility and its important role in the world revolution now on tracks. Marijuana is not much of a force of any kind in the “under-developed” world, except for its use as a religious sacrament, simply because people in these areas have a lot more basic things on their minds—they are still primarily concerned with feeding and clothing themselves, housing and educating themselves, with defending themselves from imperialist armies and colonialist exploiters, and they don’t have much time available for getting high and enjoying the fruits of abundance as the young people of the West have.

But it is the West we’re concerned with here, because that’s where we are and that’s where this book will be published and read. And it’s in the West that marijuana is an issue, simply because so many Westerners (or post-western young people) are not only smoking weed and feeling its effects but are also being mercilessly and viciously prosecuted by the forces of the capitalist state. Thus the act of smoking marijuana and getting high is in the West a political act, if only because it carries heavy political consequences, but also (as I’ve tried to say above) because it has definite economic and cultural effects within the context of Western culture.

George Orwell made this point very effectively in his book *1984*, describing the illicit coupling of Winston Smith and a young sister who worked with him in the Ingsee bureaucracy: “You could not have pure love or pure lust nowadays. No emotion was pure, because everything was mixed up with fear and hatred. Their embrace had been a battle, the climax a victory. It was a blow struck against the Party. It was a political act.” Not in itself, that is, but because it took place, as everything takes place, in a political context (just as marijuana use now takes place in a political context in the West), and because the state had set itself up as against the spontaneity and freedom inherent in the act of love. If the state makes fucking illegal, then fucking is a political act, an

act of insurrection, “a blow struck against the party.”

But this is all just descriptive so far. What we want to find out is how is marijuana use a political act, and what are its political effects? Intrinsically, marijuana has revolutionary potential in a control-and-profit-oriented social order because it breaks down control at the individual level, it breaks down the artificial barriers which have been erected inside people’s heads so as to keep them in line, it destroys the Western concepts of time and space which have been developed as a function of industrialism and imperialism. Marijuana puts you in touch with your senses, and your reawakened senses will put you in touch with the natural world, that is, the world outside the limits of the factories and offices and schools and penitentiaries of the machine society of the West. These are some of the primary intrinsic effects of marijuana use in America today, and its social effect is precisely parallel to its intrinsic effect. That is to say, where marijuana puts people in a position of conflict with the dominant culture by heightening their sensitivity and rendering them incapable of living and working unprotestingly in the death culture, so does it place marijuana smokers in a conflict relationship with the forces of established order which exist primarily to maintain the death culture by eliminating from active society all subversive elements, that is, people who reject and rebel against the basic assumptions of scarcity capitalist society. Young people who would not otherwise come to see themselves as being seriously in conflict with the established order are steadily being politicized and radicalized by the “legal” apparatus of the capitalist state simply because they persist in smoking marijuana and trying to stay high—even though most of them originally wanted to have nothing to do with “politics” at all.

Smoking marijuana in a society which has declared marijuana illegal makes you a criminal, subject in many states and also federally to imprisonment as a felon, and everyone who smokes marijuana under the present sys-

tem is (or quickly becomes) aware of the dire consequences of this innocent act. Even if you aren't ever arrested, jailed, tried or imprisoned, you still live under constant fear of being busted by the ubiquitous narcotics police, you are subject to having your phone tapped, your person and possessions (starting with your home) pawed over and ripped apart by these goons and their uniformed accomplices, your privacy subject to violation by the police at any moment of the night or day. And if you do fall into the clutches of the police and their associates in the prosecutor's office and judicial chambers and jails and penitentiaries, you are thrown into a world you would never have thought could exist in the kind of country you'd always thought America was. For the courts and the jails are the carefully-disguised cesspools of American society—only those who are branded as criminals ever find out how hopelessly vile and perverted these institutions are. And in the past few years thousands and thousands of young people who would otherwise have gone through their lives as my parents did, believing in the garbage and lies dished out by the “legal” authorities about their wonderful justice and their noble penal institutions (they call them “correctional facilities”), are being exposed to the grim realities of American life by virtue of their use of the killer weed marijuana.

This has had a tremendous radicalizing effect on American youth, and where SDS and the anti-war movement and other overtly political forces have been unable to convert the youth masses to a revolutionary point of view and a new political awareness, the police and courts through their persecution of marijuana smokers have succeeded. For once you are treated like a criminal you start to develop what we call “outlaw consciousness”—you realize that somehow you have become an enemy of the state, and as you get high you start to think about the nature of the state that considers this wonderfully euphoric and benevolent act a crime.

You start asking the questions we were talking about

a few pages back, and you start coming up with some answers—answers which force you to reconsider your whole approach to living and which make you realize finally that (as one of our slogans goes), “If you wanna get high you’re gonna have to fight.” And you begin to see just what it is you’re fighting against, and what has to be done about it—you see that the whole repressive political and economic and cultural machinery of the capitalist state must be dismantled and thrown onto the junkheap of history. And then you smoke some more weed, and you start to get down.

Let me give you an example from my own experience, or I should say the example of my own experience, as a case very much in point. When I first started smoking marijuana, in 1961, I was still in college, trying to come to some sort of accommodation with the system. I was more or less aware that things weren’t what they were supposed to be in America, but I felt essentially that it was just the fault of a few elected officials or Ed Sullivan or something, I didn’t know what and didn’t much care as long as I could go along my own way and do what I wanted to do, which was listen to music and get high and read and write poetry and just have a good time. Marijuana fit right into this life I had already created for myself, and it made things even groovier.

But the more weed I smoked the less I was able to stomach the stupidities and the daily irrelevancies of the so-called educational system I was caught up in, and I grew gradually farther and farther away from the machine world it proposed.

Going to class wiped out on weed really makes you realize how ridiculous the whole Western system of “education” really is, how little it has to do with learning anything of value, and how destructive of native intelligence, curiosity and creativity it is. After a few months of this contradictory strain I dropped out of school for almost a year to immerse myself in Black ghetto life, which I approached from a stupid romantic beatnik viewpoint

which held that there was where people really lived and fulfilled themselves. It wasn't like that though, and it didn't take me long to find out how fucked up America really is at its core, how pervasive and evil racism and industrial exploitation are in this country.

Some street brothers from that scene talked me into going back to school because my parents would pay for it and I wouldn't have to scuffle as hard as they (my street brothers) had to. So I re-enrolled in college, took a B.A. in American Literature and went on to Detroit to the Wayne State University Graduate School in English, where I attended classes until my government loan ran out. By that time I had lost all interest in ever becoming a functioning member of American society—all I wanted to do was drop out of that mess and try to make some kind of alternative life possibility for myself and the people I lived with.

In the summer of 1964 a group of us got together over a whole lot of joints and smoked up a fantasy life that we immediately started to actualize. We formed an organization called the Artists' Workshop, rented a house with a big living room right in the middle of Detroit, and started putting on our own free music concerts, poetry readings, and exhibits of painting and photography. Music and marijuana held us together, inspired us and provided the impetus for everything we did. We started renting houses and came to control six full two-story houses and two storefronts all on the same block, which we managed collectively as the Artists' Workshop Cooperative Housing Project. In the storefronts we had a workshop for our concerts, meetings, and for a short-lived venture called the Free University of Detroit, which was supposed to be an alternative to the established university system. We also had a printing press and silk-screen equipment with which we printed our own books and posters and pamphlets.

But this operation was short-lived because just after we opened our Free University I was sentenced to do six months in the Detroit House of Correction for getting

high. The actual crime was “possession of marijuana,” reduced from the greater crime of “sales of marijuana” by virtue of my guilty plea to what they called “the lesser offense.” When I had first moved to Detroit in the spring of 1964 I found that there were scores of people in the university neighborhood who smoked marijuana regularly, but that there was really no one with a regular source of supply, and I began to arrange to supply the community with weed through friends of mine in the Black ghetto who did have steady connections for the sacrament.

I kept and sold enough grass to keep my friends and neighbors (and myself) high all the time, and one day in the fall of 1964 I sold two matchboxes of marijuana to the “friend of a friend” who turned out to be an undercover narcotics agent.

I retained a shady lawyer through another friend who had “connections” through his uncle, a bondsman, and this lawyer arranged with the prosecutor and the judge in charge of my case for me to plead guilty to a reduced charge of possession (as is usually done in these cases). I paid the lawyer \$150, the court \$250, and was placed on two years’ probation and sent back to my neighborhood with a “stern warning,” as they say in the newspapers. I was cynically advised by narcotics bureau detectives to switch to scotch in the future and stay out of trouble, but I knew that that was just as phony as the transparently phony court routine I was shunted through by my “fixer” lawyer, and I just went back to what I had been doing before I got popped, which was organizing the Workshop and trying to help organize my community.

This was in the winter of 1964. Ten months later, on August 16, 1965, I was arrested by the narcotics police for the second time, this time for letting a disguised undercover narcotics agent talk me into letting him drive me across town to score an ounce of marijuana from a friend of mine who was dealing weed for a living. He had followed me around for three weeks begging me to sell him some, give him some, lead him to some reefer, and I

finally decided that the best way to get rid of him (short of knocking him on the head) would be to get him some worthless marijuana so he'd go away and never bother me again. I knew my friend across town had just been burned on a few pounds of bogus weed and I thought this way I could help him recover a little piece of his losses and get rid of this creep at the same time.

The only problem was that this creep was a narcotics detective in drag, and as soon as he dropped me back off at my commune his gang of thugs knocked my door down and dragged our whole household off to jail, charging me with "sales and possession" again.

By this time I was thoroughly pissed off at the narcotics police and their whole set-up, and I determined that this time we weren't going to take it lying down. I couldn't understand why they were spending so much time trying to bust me, and the whole thing really made me think about the significance of the work we were doing in the neighborhood. We had been operating under the assumption that we weren't doing anything that hadn't been held up to us as desirable by the dominant social order—we were managing our own affairs, we weren't bothering anybody, we tried to stay out of the way and just make our life for ourselves. The only "illegal" thing we did was to smoke marijuana, and by this time we came to feel that we were taking a disproportionate share of the heat that was starting to come down on weed-heads everywhere

All we had wanted to do was drop out of the mainstream of American life (which my wife described at that time as "a perpetual sewer"), just as new generations of Americans had been doing ever since Europeans settled this land, and live out our fantasies of a different kind of social order from that of our parents, fantasies which were directly inspired by the weed we smoked and the music and writing and art we lived with and made. We didn't want to have anything to do with the straight, "normal" world at all—we didn't like what straight people were doing to each other and to the rest of the people on

the planet (as well as to the planet itself), but we figured if we left them alone they'd leave us alone, and we could reach and maintain a sort of détente which would let straight people destroy themselves while we concentrated on making our fantasies real and building up an alternative social order in the process.

Yet here was this new factor—the outside world couldn't stand to let us alone. The police and the people who give them their orders evidently figured that we were doing something altogether wrong and that we had to be stopped before we attracted any more converts from their university campuses and their suburban living rooms.

We weren't doing anything illegal except getting high every day, and we didn't make a big thing of that, but that single issue served as the excuse for the power structure to send its dogs down on us, to shut us up by terrifying us before we could do any more harm to its sense of order. We were too naive to see it like that at the time—we thought it was just a personal vendetta being carried out by the narcotics squad goons—but, objectively, that's what was happening, although it took us some time to get hip to it.

When we were arrested that time, in August of 1965, the bust made the headlines in the Detroit dailies: *WSU Dope Pushers Arrested in Campus Dope Raid!* The stories under these headlines had nothing at all to do with the facts of the matter—after all, I had been entrapped into letting an undercover agent drive me across town to procure one ounce of marijuana for him from an established dealer—and this development really started us to thinking that there must be some kind of conspiratorial plot behind the actions of the police and the papers.

We couldn't understand it, but we knew that if it was going to be this way our course of action was clear—we had to strike back and try to expose the lies and slanders of the police and the newspapers, if only to protect ourselves from further raids and arrests.

The first thing I did (thinking it was all based on legalistic grounds) was to stop smoking weed—I refused to have anything to do with marijuana from the day of my arrest to the day I was sent to DeHoCo six months later—so they wouldn’t be able to bust me on that again. Then I started looking for a lawyer who would defend me on the grounds that I had been entrapped into the criminal transaction, and that the Michigan marijuana laws were unconstitutional and void. I paid a lawyer who had been recommended to me an incredible sum of money on the assumption that he would prepare the necessary documents and fight my case for me, and, satisfied that everything would be taken care of, I went back to the neighborhood and increased my work there, trying to get our thing together enough so we wouldn’t be so vulnerable to any more assaults like that in the future.

Well, two weeks before the scheduled trial date the lawyer called me up and told me that we wouldn’t be able to fight the case; the judge had ruled that “entrapment was no defense” and there was no chance that we could win it on the constitutional issues. I still wanted to bring these issues out in a trial but the lawyer refused, saying that we had no chance of winning and that he didn’t want to be responsible for my going to prison for 20 years to life (that’s the penalty for sales of marijuana in the state of Michigan to this day). He promised me that he had fixed things up with the prosecutor, and that all I’d get was some more probation and another fine. Evidently he had some “connections” in the judiciary and in the prosecutor’s stable, and he told me that this was the only way to do it.

I took his phony advice and pled guilty to the reduced charge of possession (they drop the one when you plead guilty to the other—that’s euphemistically known as “plea bargaining” in the law journals, “copping a plea” on the street), but when I went up before an old senile half-drunk judge for sentencing he “gave” me six months in the House of Corrections as a start on my three years’

probation.

I was enraged—not so much at the judge and his well-paid accomplice as at my own stupidity in trusting a creep like this fine liberal lawyer I had retained. I had known from my previous experience how crooked the whole “legal” scene was before I got involved in this deal, and I felt that it was my own fault for going against my principles and accepting the phony deal in the first place. I did the six months and hated every minute of it, cursing myself for my stupidity and the state for its viciousness in perpetrating such atrocious laws and institutions on the people.

I still wasn’t thoroughly politicized, though; I felt even more strongly than before that the only solution to this shit was to drop even farther out of the mainstream and to get our alternative scene together so that we would be invulnerable to further attacks on us. I still thought it was some kind of mistake, that there was no reason behind our persecution, and that if we stayed out of the way of the police they would stop bothering us. We couldn’t possibly be a threat to their order, strong as we thought it was, and it must just be a matter of somebody making a vicious mistake.

When I got out of jail after doing the six months I found that a huge change had taken place in America—this was August of 1966, the start of the tremendous hippie explosion—and it took me some time to get used to what was going on. In February, when I was locked up, our scene was small and relatively closed—there were pockets of beatniks in cities across the country, enclaves which were peopled by a sort of intellectual-artistic elite who had no thought of becoming any kind of mass phenomenon. I had walked out of the House of Correction thinking that the best thing people like ourselves could do would be to quit dropping acid, because that activity just kept getting us in trouble with the law and it took time and energy and attention away from the real constructive work we were doing—our music, our art and

artifacts—which were the important thing that had to be continued. I felt at the time that we should protect ourselves and our culture even if it meant giving up our sacraments, because we were going to save the world with this shit and we couldn't afford to be slowed down any longer by the petty police-state mentality of the established state.

So I came out of DeHoCo issuing statements that all heads should stop smoking marijuana and start working for a change in the marijuana laws, because we were just going to get arrested all the time if we kept on breaking the law like that and giving the police an excuse to round us up and get us off the streets and into their jails. Then I looked around and saw that all of a sudden there were hundreds and even thousands of teenagers and young people of all ages smoking weed, dropping acid, letting their hair grow long, and listening and dancing to the strange new rock and roll music that filled the air. This blew my mind completely—I had thought that there weren't many of us in the whole country, and now there were freeks and dope-fiends everywhere, and I had to check this whole thing out before I made any more stupid statements. So I started smoking a lot of weed and taking a lot of LSD so I could put together in my head what was happening around me.

It appeared that all the fears of the straight world and their police were being realized—it looked like the whole social order was falling apart, and there was nothing they could do about it. What we had been doing secretly and even furtively, hidden away in the dirtiest parts of the nation's cities, these new “hippies” were doing out in the open, and they didn't even care who knew it. They had about as much respect for the dying order as we did—that is to say, none at all—and they still lived right in the middle of it, in their parents' plastic homes, going to high school every day, surrounded by the incredible ruins of the American landscape. Their rebellion was anything but ideological—it came from their guts, and it

was manifest in their clothing, their hair, their music, and all the weed they were smoking in an attempt to get high and stay high. They didn't want to have anything to do with the future their parents had so carefully mapped out for them, they didn't know where they were going but they were headed there just the same, and it was obvious to everyone concerned that they couldn't be stopped. The law, the police, the courts, all the instruments of suppression thrown up by the state had no meaning to them—they were high and they were getting higher, they were out of control and getting farther out every day, and the killer weed marijuana had everything to do with their rebellion.

I stepped out of jail into the middle of this new development, and the existence of all these mutants and freaks made me think real hard about what we were doing and the effects of our work. We had obviously started something that was bigger than we ever thought possible, what was happening was certainly out of our control, and it was truly amazing to watch this new American flower unfold before our eyes. We had never even considered the possibility of being involved in a mass phenomenon, yet the seeds we had sown in the dirty soil of America's cities were bringing forth a monstrous harvest that was spreading all over the Western world—and it was obvious that the seed was a marijuana seed! People who had been smoking dope and getting high in apartments and communes had picked up guitars and amplifiers and drums and microphones and were now making records that were blasting back at everyone over the radio stations of America and Europe, and masses of young people were digging these records and the message that went into them—the message that everyone should just smoke some grass, get high and have a good time.

For the new post-Beatles rock and roll music, and especially the new American rock and roll which rose up out of the streets and parks of San Francisco in 1966, is above all else, *dope music*, and everyone who listened and

danced to it got the message. Turn on, tune in, drop out—hey people smile on your brother, everybody get together and love one another right now!

Marijuana took rock and roll into the future, and rock and roll took marijuana to the masses so they could climb into the future too, and nobody's been the same since. The weed shaped the music and the music shaped the people who came in contact with it, and the people have gone forth to reshape the world in the image of the freedom they know and love. But they ran into a problem that hadn't been anticipated—the people and the social order they wanted to change didn't want to be changed, didn't want to change itself, was determined to stay the same no matter what—and this realization has had an incredible effect on the innocence of American youth.

It was something we couldn't understand—in our naiveté we thought that things were fucked up because the people in control just didn't know any better, and now that we knew there was an alternative to the death culture we were going to turn them on and end all the problems of the world. Why, it was just honorable men making an honorable mistake, and once they get turned on to the possibilities for change we know about, everything will be all right. That's what we thought, and that's when we ran into the juggernaut, and that's when we started to wake up.

To say that we were unprepared for the resistance we encountered from the police and their backers would be a serious understatement—we literally felt that we were doing the whole society a favor by letting them in on what we were doing, and we couldn't understand it when they turned on us and tried to stomp us out. The joints we held out to the people were snatched out of our hands by the narcotics police and used as evidence to send us to prison. When we started speaking out against the war in the streets, thinking it was all just a mistake, we got clubbed down, beaten and arrested for “disturbing the peace” and “resisting arrest.” When we tried to tell people

what we were doing and what we wanted to do in the pages of our maniac newspapers we were busted for “obscenity” and our printers threatened by the FBI and the local Gestapo. When we went to Chicago to demonstrate the existence of our alternative culture by playing free music, passing around free food, printing free newspapers, and carrying on freely in the parks, we were assaulted by the massive force of the Chicago police, Illinois National Guard and federal army troops, beaten, clubbed, gassed, vilified in the press, chased out of town and across the country and into the courts by the self-righteous forces of law and ordure (eventually symbolized very precisely by Judge Julius Hoffman). When we tried to create a People’s Park in Berkeley, a place built up on the muddy ruins of an unused field where people could come and get high and listen to music and just be together with each other out in the open, we were assaulted even more viciously, James Rector was murdered by an Alameda County Deputy Sheriff, helicopters spewed tear-gas down on thousands of people in the streets, hundreds of people were arrested and brutalized at the Santa Rita Prison Farm before being released with all charges dropped.

When we raised our voices against Nixon’s criminal excursion into Cambodia last May, in an incredible scenario right out of *1984* (“War is Peace”), four of our brothers and sisters were shot down at Kent State University just for being on campus at the same time as the trigger-happy National Guard. And this past summer, all across the country, wherever we tried to gather to celebrate our existence and our national culture with our own people and our own bands at rock and roll festivals, indignant loud-talking politicians moved to drive us back from “their” lands and deny us our right to assemble peacefully with each other, using the pretext, the time-tested and time-honored pretext that we were smoking marijuana and breaking the law thereby.

All of these events formed a continuum of growth and

awareness for young people, and it would be foolish to underestimate the role marijuana has played in this process. Our culture is bound together with marijuana, millions of young people now smoke weed regularly, and thousands of these millions have been persecuted by the state for marijuana crimes. Those who haven't been directly attacked by the police and the state because of their use of marijuana have seen what happens to their brothers and sisters who do get busted for weed, and we have been drawn closer and closer together by this repression as well as by the unifying force of millions of shared joints of weed smoked together by all different types of young people.

Hippies and radicals, once wary of each other's thing, have been united by the police who are their common enemy, and once the police throw them together they sit down with some grass and smoke up agreements and mutual understandings. Marijuana and rock and roll have served as the agents of union above and beyond the immediate unifying force of police clubs, and they have kept us together after the immediate threat and reality of actual physical oppression was removed. Freeks could relate to radicals because they were all getting high together, and the radicals could relate to the freeks because they were both getting busted by the same police together. Everyone could relate to the issue of the war, because, on the one hand, it was politically and morally monstrous, and on the other, it required our bodies to be impressed into the military mold, which is the antithesis of the life culture on the most basic level. And those of us who were drafted into the imperialist armies of America took our weed with us, turning on more and more of our brothers in the service and raising the level of resistance to the blind drive of the military.

I should repeat that most of us never wanted to get involved in political activity at all—we were forced into it by the repressive actions of the state, and we started to learn that what we were doing, even if it was just getting

high and trying to have a good time, was dangerous within the context of the control system of the West. We learned that we not only have to protect ourselves, but that in order to bring about the new world of our marijuana visions we will have to destroy the old order completely, since it is implacably committed to exploiting and manipulating people in order to keep the profits flowing into the hands of the greedy pigs of capitalism. Eldridge Cleaver summed it up perfectly for me when he said, in a conversation with the writer Lee Lockwood, from his refuge in Algeria:

“You see, I look upon this whole thing as like, the oppressor is wasting people’s time. To me, that’s what it simply boils down to, because there are other things that I would like to be doing. But you’re being interfered with, and you know you can’t do your thing, because if you don’t pay attention to what’s going on around you, you may be sitting under a tree, you know, reading some poems and smoking a joint and talking to your other half, and some pigs will come by and drag you to the gas chamber or shoot you or crack your head. So you have to get up from beneath that tree, remembering that what you want to do is get back to that tree just as soon as you possibly can, and so like, get up and sober up and come down off your trip and deal with the pig, and then you can talk about going back to do your thing.”

And my own experience has been that those pigs will come up and bust you just for smoking that joint — that’s all they need to put you away. Going back to my narrative of my own experience, I was busted for the third time in January 1967, along with 55 other people from my neighborhood, in a last-ditch attempt by Detroit police and city officials to break up our counter-community. It didn’t work, it just exposed the sinister machinations of

the power structure even further, and it was a decisive factor in politicizing the majority of the people in our community. We finally saw that we were really a threat to the hegemony of the established order, and that gave us more inspiration than anything else possibly could have. We launched a full-scale attack on the marijuana laws which is being waged even as I sit here in the penitentiary, but more than that, the big marijuana bust of 1967 shot us into a whole different stage of our development, and prepared us for the tasks we are presently working on.

That raid, and the seriousness with which it was conceived and carried out by the police and the Detroit power structure, finally made us realize that it wasn't simply about marijuana any more, that we were being attacked because of the alternative lifestyle we offered to the youth of Detroit, and it just made us more determined than ever not only to survive, but to carry our message of freedom and resistance to every young brother and sister in the country. We saw that we were winning, that we were becoming so powerful as a force for change that the power structure was trembling and shaking in its boots, and that knowledge propelled us and inspired us to re-dedicate ourselves to change, to revolution, to the eventual destruction and abolition of the social order which militates so vehemently against liberation and freedom. We saw, as Eldridge put it, that it was time to come out from under our tree and deal with the pigs who were trying to interfere with us, to deal with them in such a way that they won't be able to interfere with people any longer.

This same process has been happening all over the country and indeed throughout the western world—the more young people smoke marijuana, the higher they get, and the higher they get the less inclined they are to put up with the hypocrisies and the naked exploitation and oppression of the established order. And the more the established state tries to repress the youth revolution, using marijuana laws and the narcotics police as one of the

main forces of that repression, the more determined young people become to abolish that state and to establish a new order which is not only responsive to their own needs and desires but to the needs and desires of all people on Earth.

We want a social order in which people can get high all the time, and stay high, and develop their human potential to its highest possible stage. We want a state which is not based on repression and control, a state which is not based on greed and exploitation, a state which serves the interests of all the people and not just those who make up the privileged class of "owners" and controllers. We want a state which will commit itself to the future of humanity, not the past, and which will bring all of its resources and powers to bear on the problems of making a smooth and peaceful transition from the old obsolete order to the new world of the future. And we know about the new order because we are already living it, it has revealed itself to us through the medium of our holy marijuana visions, and we are determined to bring it into being, not only here in America, but throughout the world.

Marijuana is an issue of great importance in the current social situation because it turns people on to the possibilities of new life on the planet, it breaks down machine thinking, separation, and control, it prepares people for the new age even while they are still living inside the shell of the old; it serves as a unifying force for young people of all ages, and it promotes communal consciousness while breaking down phony individualism and lack-love. It is a political force by virtue of the opposition it encounters from the established state, which opposition heightens people's consciousness of the contradictions inherent in the old order and exposes the repressive and piggyish nature of the established state.

Marijuana, and the reaction it has engendered among the dinosaur people, dramatizes the contradictions between the old order and the new and is helping to speed

the transition from old-time separatist, low-energy culture to the new communal, high-energy culture of the future. Though marijuana is a seemingly innocuous weed worthy of little interest or attention, the reaction by the established order to its widespread use reveals its revolutionary nature. The millions of young people who now smoke marijuana regularly and openly have been taught through excessive repression by the state that they are becoming a dangerous political force, a force which will eventually destroy the old order completely unless it is checked and checked fast. The seriousness of the threat posed to the established order by the marijuana-smoking youth natives can be precisely measured by the desperation of such control measures as the Operation Intercept conspiracy headed by Nixon and Mitchell, and the not at all unrelated massacre at Kent State (May 1970), which demonstrated that the established order will not stop short of shooting young white Americans down in the streets (as it has not hesitated to shoot down workers, Indians, black people, yellow people, and any other people who have stood in its way) to protect its own piggish interests.

The Marijuana Revolution is just part of the worldwide revolution being carried out by peoples of the Earth who refuse to put up any longer with the exploitation, greed and oppression of the Euro-Amerikan ownership-class; in some ways it is the most important revolution now in progress because it is being fought by the very people who are supposed to perpetuate and carry on the exploitation and oppression of the West. Young people who would otherwise have passed smoothly into the mainstream of Euro-Amerikan life have been led (and it is important to understand how great a role marijuana has played in this process) to reject and repudiate that horrible life—and not only to reject it, but to commit themselves to abolishing it, and making sure that it will never rear its ugly head on this planet again. ☯



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Anarchism by *Peter Kropotkin*—Included in the 1910 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, this essay provides a thorough overview of the anarchist school of political philosophy in Europe and America prior to the first world war. By the author of *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*.

Anarchism: What It Really Stands For by *Emma Goldman*—“Anarchism stands for a social order based on the free grouping of individuals for the purpose of producing real social wealth; an order that will guarantee to every human being free access to the earth and full enjoyment of the necessities of life, according to individual desires, tastes, and inclinations.”

Confessions of an Amerikan LSD Eater by *Dale R. Gowan*—This essay was written in 1991 while the author was incarcerated at Elmira Correctional Facility, a maximum-security prison in New York State. It recounts the author's experience of arrest and imprisonment for the advocacy, use and distribution of psychedelic sacraments, and briefly examines the history of the U.S. “war on drugs.”

Perilous Play by *Louisa May Alcott* (author of *Little Women*, etc.)—first published in 1869, this classic short story by one of America's most widely recognized authors, a contemporary of Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson, is a romantic adventure tale about what happens when a group of affluent young people begin to experiment with hashish. It was written at a time when hashish (Cannabis) was perfectly legal, and was gaining popularity among adventurous artists and intellectuals in America and Europe.

Psychedelic Yoga: The Application of Yoga Meditation Techniques to the Use of Psychedelic Sacraments by *Sri Brahmarishi Narad*—This essay was originally published in mimeographed form in the late 1960s, and was circulated in the San Francisco area and other gathering places of the psychedelic subculture. Its theme of the similarity of the psychedelic experience and the spiritual perspectives of Eastern religion and philosophy were widely discussed at the time. Practical advice is given about specific yoga techniques that can be used with advantage during psychedelic experiences.

A Hashish House in New York: The Curious Adventures of an Individual who Indulged in a Few Pipefulls of the Narcotic Hemp by *H. H. Kane*—first published in 1883 in *Harpers Magazine*—a trip to a legal 19TH century hashish smoking establishment in New York City.

Mescal: A New Artificial Paradise by *Havelock Ellis*—One of the earliest psychological studies of the effects of mescaline (peyote), by a pioneering psychologist famous for his groundbreaking studies of human sexuality. Ellis experimented with the drug himself, and gave it to a number of creative artists and intellectuals. The essay first appeared in 1898.

Session Games People Play: A Manual For the Use of LSD by *Lisa Bieberman*—first published in 1967, just as laws against LSD were being passed in the USA. A flourishing psychedelic counterculture existed in many American cities at that time, and many young people were experimenting with the drug. This manual was published by the Psychedelic Information Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This LUMINIST reprint includes the entire text of the first edition.

Phanerothyme: A Western Approach to the Religious Use of Psychochemicals by *Lisa Bieberman*—Originally published in pamphlet form by the Psychedelic Information Center of Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1968. This treatise on the religious and philosophical uses of mind-expanding chemicals draws its title from the word coined by Aldous Huxley in correspondence with his colleague, Dr. Humphrey Osmond, as the two scientists sought an appropriate term for reference to this newly discovered class of drugs. While the latter's suggested term *psychedelic* subsequently became dominant, Bieberman suggests that its overuse in popular culture has diluted its original meaning. In reverting to Huxley's coinage, she seeks to bring a fresh, serious, and reverent perspective to the discussion of the sacramental use of these substances.

The Hashish Man and other stories by *Lord Dunsany*—A fantastic tale of traveling in the astral body and discovering the secrets of fabled lost cities with the aid of hashish, from the 1910 collection, *A Dreamer's Tales*. Also included are the loosely related stories "Bethmoora" and "The Madness of Andelsprutz." The author was admired by Alesiter Crowley and is considered a major influence on modern fantasists like Lovecraft and Tolkien.

Peyote by Jack Green—The author was an iconoclastic literary critic in New York City's Lower East Side in the 1950s. He published a mimeographed zine entitled *newspaper* from a storefront at 225 East 5th Street. His journal was experimental in style as well as content, eschewing such literary conventions as capitalization and standard punctuation. This essay describing his experiences with peyote, written long before there were any "laws" against its possession and sale, originally appeared in 1959, in *newspaper* #8.

The Psychology of Hashish by Aleister Crowley—First published in 1909 in *The Equinox*, this essay recounts the author's search for a drug that would "loosen the girders of the soul" and quicken the attainment of results in the practice of yoga and meditation. Following his regimen of "the means of science and the aims of religion," Crowley uses the analytical system of Buddhist psychology to describe the value of Cannabis as a "microscope of the soul"—an instrument useful to the serious student of mysticism and Magick. \$9.99

The Great Drug Delusion & The Drug Panic by Aleister Crowley—two articles submitted under different pseudonyms to *The English Review*, a London monthly, in 1922. Crowley suggests that the phenomenon of addiction results in part from the salacious coverage of drugs in the popular press, which plants "pernicious suggestions" in the minds of the populace about the inability of the human will to overcome their lure.

Acid and the Avatar by Dale R. Gowin—published in *Harvest: Canada's Up-front Head Magazine*, Vol. I, No. 3, 1980. "The massive release of LSD into millions of Western minds in the 1960s stimulated a spiritual and cultural renaissance of unprecedented proportions. Alice Bailey's Great Invocation had been answered."



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